

Fisher Harvest 2002

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Abstract

Wisconsin trappers harvested 1,803 fisher during the 2002 season. The harvest consisted of 1,014 males, 773 females, and 16 unknowns. The five leading counties of harvest were Bayfield (183), Rusk (135), Oneida (126), Sawyer (122) and Vilas (110).

Background

Dhuey, et al. (2002) described the results of the 2001 fisher trapping season. Kohn et.al. (1994) described the events leading up to the establishment of Wisconsin's first fisher trapping season in 1985 and summarized fisher harvests and regulations through 1992. Basically the fisher trapping season was lengthened, numbers of harvest permits increased, and the area open to fisher trapping expanded as the fisher population continued to grow rapidly.

Wisconsin is now divided into 6 Fisher Management Zones (FMZ) which are clusters of deer management units containing similar densities of fisher (Fig. 1). Fisher Management Zone E was open to fisher trapping for the first time for the 2000 season. Fisher occur in low numbers in FMZ F but it is currently closed to any fisher harvest. Fisher harvest goals are set annually for each FMZ based upon population size in relation to management goals. The numbers of harvest permits issued are based on trapper success rates during the previous year in those zones. Negotiated amounts of the harvest in each zone within the ceded territory are allotted to Native American (Chippewa) trappers. The current FMZ's were expanded and new zones were added in 1996. The 2002 fisher season was the sixth under the expanded zone framework and the third time that trapping has been allowed in FMZ E.

Methods

Non-Chippewa trappers were required to apply for fisher harvest permits by 10 September, and designate which management zone they would like to trap. The application fee for a fisher permit is \$3.00, (included in the Patron license fee), with successful applicants selected at random.

Trappers were required to register all fishers with DNR personnel. The date and area (county and deer management unit) of kill, sex of the animal, type of trap used, and the trapper's name and address were recorded for each fisher registered. Similar information from the off-reservation Chippewa harvest was compiled by Jon Gilbert of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and provided to the DNR for use in this report. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX computer by field personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

The 2002 Fisher season ran from 1 November-31 December for non-Chippewa trappers and from 1 November 2002 - 31 March 2003 for Chippewa trappers. A total of 4,730 regular harvest permits were issued to 4,342 applicants (Table 1). The number of permits available for the 2002 season was less than in 2001 when 5,239 applicants were issued 5,452 permits. In

zones where numbers of harvest permits available exceeded the number of applicants, some trappers received more than one permit. FMZ C and D were the only zones that had more permits available than applicants. A small number of applicants in these zones were issued a second tag (Table 1). A tribal harvest declaration of 478 fisher was agreed to for off-reservation treaty harvest.

Trappers registered 1,803 fisher in 2002. These included 282 fisher taken off-reservation by Chippewa trappers (Table 2; Jonathan Gilbert, personal comm.), and 6 fisher taken on the Reservations in Wisconsin (Menominee, and Stockbridge). Some Native Americans have been registering on reservation kills with DNR personnel. Also, 46 fisher were registered as incidental take fisher. These are fisher that were either trapped incidental to other trapping activities, found dead, or a road kill, and are included in the statewide totals. Trapper success averaged 31% statewide in 2002; higher than 2001 success rate of 28%.

Most fisher (501) were trapped in FMZ B, followed by FMZ A (460), FMZ D (459), FMZ C (326), and FMZ E (40) (Table 3, Fig. 1). Fisher harvests were highest in Bayfield (183), Rusk (135), Oneida (126), Sawyer (122) and Vilas (110) counties (Table 4, Fig. 2), and in Deer Management Units 03 (110), 18 (91), 46 (78), 44 (63), and 23 (60) (Table 5, Fig. 3). Males comprised 56% of the harvest, while females made up 43%. Sex was not recorded for 16 of the fisher harvested.

The silkier fur of female fisher, normally half the size of the male, used to bring a higher price. International marketing has now balanced fur values between male and female. The average price for all fisher pelts was \$23.89 in 2002, and ranged from \$14 to \$32. This was a slight increase over last year's price of \$23.14.

In 2002, 74% of the fishers were caught in conibear traps and 24% in foothold traps. Last year, 73% of the fisher harvested were captured with conibear traps and 25% were trapped with foothold traps.

The 2002 fisher harvest of 1,803 was higher than in 2001(1,702) and above the harvest goal of 1,485. Above average temperatures and easy access may have allowed trappers to pursue fisher more intently. With little snow, fisher mobility was unrestricted as well. Fisher populations remain at or above our population goals in many of the FMZ (see "Fisher Population Analyses 2003).

The WDNR Furbearer Advisory Committee has recommended a statewide harvest goal of 1,660 fisher in the 2003 season. Harvest goals by zone are: FMZ A, 450; FMZ B, 420; FMZ C, 320; FMZ D, 440; and FMZ E, 30.

Literature Cited

Kohn, B.E., N.F. Payne, J.E. Ashbrenner, W.A. Creed.
1993. The Fisher in Wisconsin. Wis. Dep. Nat. Resour. Tech. Bull. 24pp.

Dhuey B. B. Kohn and J. Olson.
2002. Fisher Harvest, 2001. IN: The Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys Report, August 2002.
Document on file at the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Bureau of Research, Monona, WI 53716

Table 1. *Numbers of state issued fisher trapping permits, number of fisher trapped, harvest quota, and permit success for the 2002 season.*

Zone	State Issued Permits	State Applicants	State Tags/ Applicant	State Fisher Trapped	State Harvest Goal	State Permit Success
A	580	803	0.72	289	190	49.8%
B	970	1,348	0.72	374	220	38.6%
C	900	774	1.16	320	208	35.6%
D	2,170	1,023	2.12	444	365	20.5%
E	110	394	0.28	37	24	33.6%
Unknown				5		
Total	4,730	4,342	1.09	1,469	1,007	31.0%

Table 2. *The 2002 Chippewa off-reservation treaty fisher harvest.*

Zone	Chippewa Harvest Declaration	Sex		Total Trapped
		Male	Female	
A	150	92	65	157
B	200	58	48	106
C	52	6	3	9
D	75	7	2	9
E	1	0	0	0
Unknown		1	0	1
Total	478	164	118	282

Table 3. *The 2002 (Non-Tribal, Chippewa ceded territory, and Tribal reservation) fisher harvest.*

Zone	Non-Tribal Harvest	Chippewa Ceded Territory Harvest	Tribal Reservation Harvest	Total Harvest
A	303	157	0	460
B	400	106	0	506
C	321	9	0	330
D	444	9	6	459
E	40	0	0	40
F	2*	0		2*
Unknown	5	1		6
Total	1,515	282	6	1,803

* fisher were incidentally taken in FMZ F, closed to fisher harvest.

Table 4. *The 2002 fisher harvest by county and sex.*

County	Male	Female	Unk	Total	County	Male	Female	Unk	Total
Ashland	33	14	0	47	Menominee	3	1	0	4
Barron	11	14	0	25	Oconto	33	18	2	53
Bayfield	100	81	2	183	Oneida	74	52	0	126
Burnett	33	26	1	60	Polk	22	15	1	38
Chippewa	29	26	2	57	Portage	1	1	0	2
Clark	7	4	0	11	Price	63	30	0	93
Douglas	45	26	0	71	Rusk	70	65	0	135
Eau Claire	2	2	0	4	Sawyer	63	59	0	122
Florence	9	6	0	15	Shawano	20	16	0	36
Forest	66	39	0	105	Taylor	38	33	0	71
Iron	17	13	1	31	Vilas	55	55	0	110
Jackson	1	3	1	5	Washburn	35	29	0	64
Langlade	48	32	1	81	Waupaca	1	0	0	1
Lincoln	54	44	0	98	Wood	0	2	0	2
Marathon	48	41	1	90	Unknown	11	6	4	21
Marinette	22	20	0	42	Total	1,014	773	16	1,803

Table 5. *The 2002 fisher harvest by deer management unit and sex.*

Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total	Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total
01	6	5	0	11	34	13	9	0	22
02	23	12	0	35	35	17	20	0	37
03	54	55	1	110	36	24	23	0	47
04	8	3	0	11	37	16	17	0	33
05	24	11	0	35	38	27	21	0	48
06	28	10	1	39	39	13	8	0	21
07	6	0	0	6	40	13	4	0	17
08	17	16	0	33	41	2	2	0	4
09	13	8	0	21	42	30	19	0	49
10	12	9	2	23	43	27	15	1	43
11	20	17	0	37	44	38	25	0	63
12	7	9	0	16	45	16	14	2	32
13	29	27	0	56	46	38	39	1	78
14	7	7	0	14	47	19	19	0	38
15	20	12	0	32	48	3	1	0	4
16	15	9	0	24	49A	11	2	0	13
17	30	22	0	52	49B	8	4	0	12
18	45	46	0	91	50	3	7	0	10
19	21	24	0	45	51A	6	3	0	9
20	25	9	0	34	51B	9	9	0	18
21*	0	1	0	1	52	28	17	0	45
22	8	12	0	20	53	0	2	0	2
23	29	30	1	60	55	2	3	1	6
24	13	5	1	19	57	0	1	0	1
25	12	10	0	22	57A	1	1	0	2
26	23	22	0	45	57B	1	0	0	1
27	1	2	0	3	57C	0	1	0	1
28	18	9	1	28	58	8	6	0	14
29A	12	10	0	22	59A	7	3	0	10
29B	13	10	0	23	59B*	1	0	0	1
30	12	8	0	20	63A*	1	0	0	1
31	28	14	0	42	Unk	8	2	4	14
32	28	24	0	52					
33	17	8	0	25	Total	1,014	773	16	1,803

*Fisher were taken incidentally or road kill, in FMZ F, closed to fisher harvest.

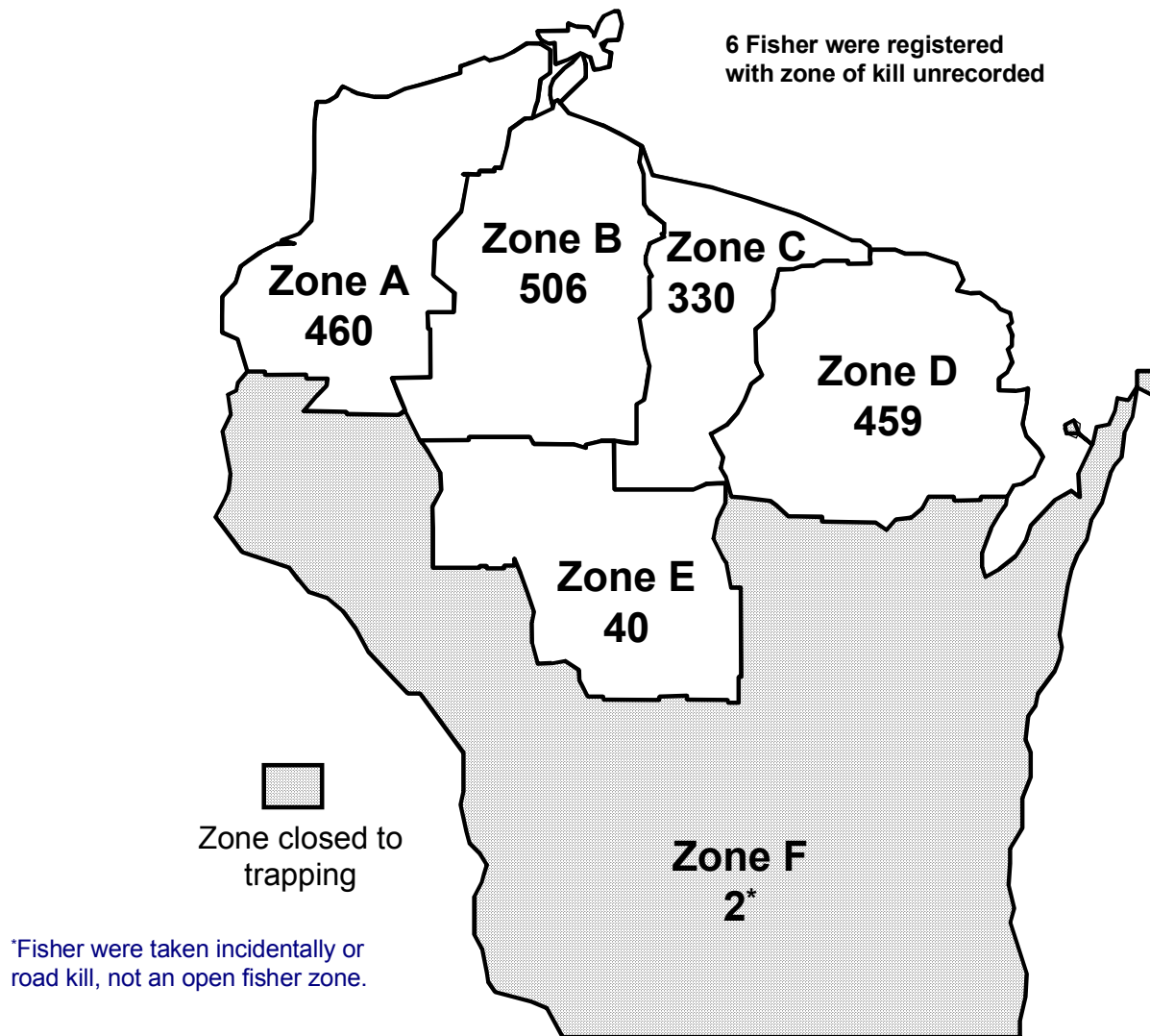


Figure 1. *The 2002 fisher harvest by management zone.*

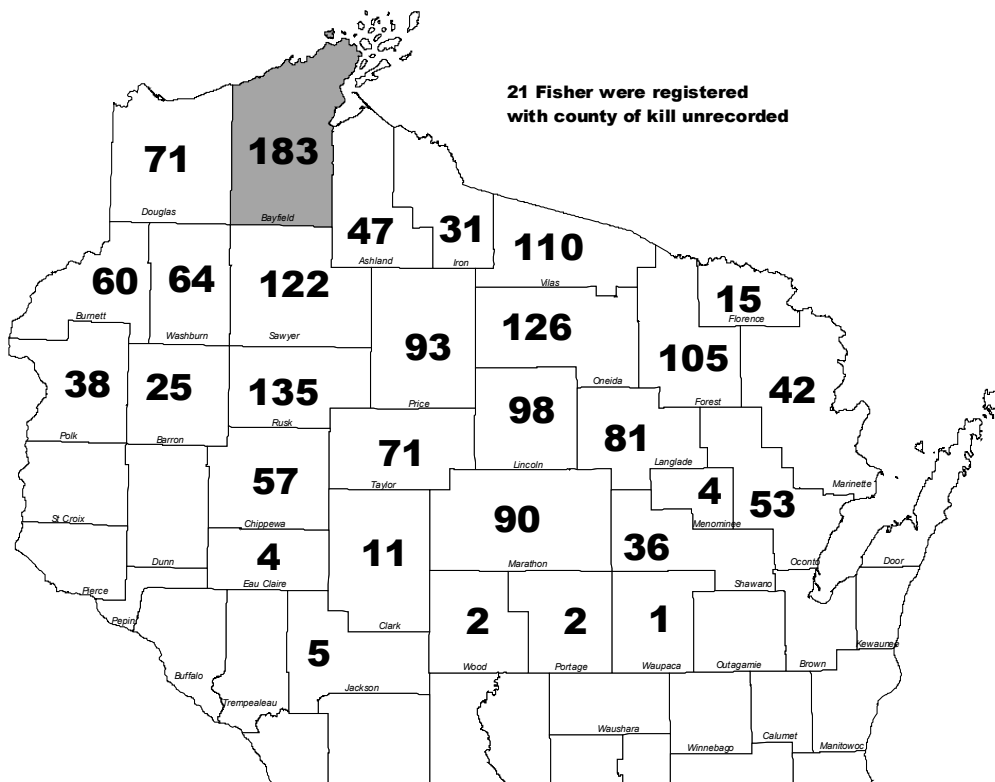


Figure 2. The 2002 fisher harvest by county (shaded county is county of highest harvest).

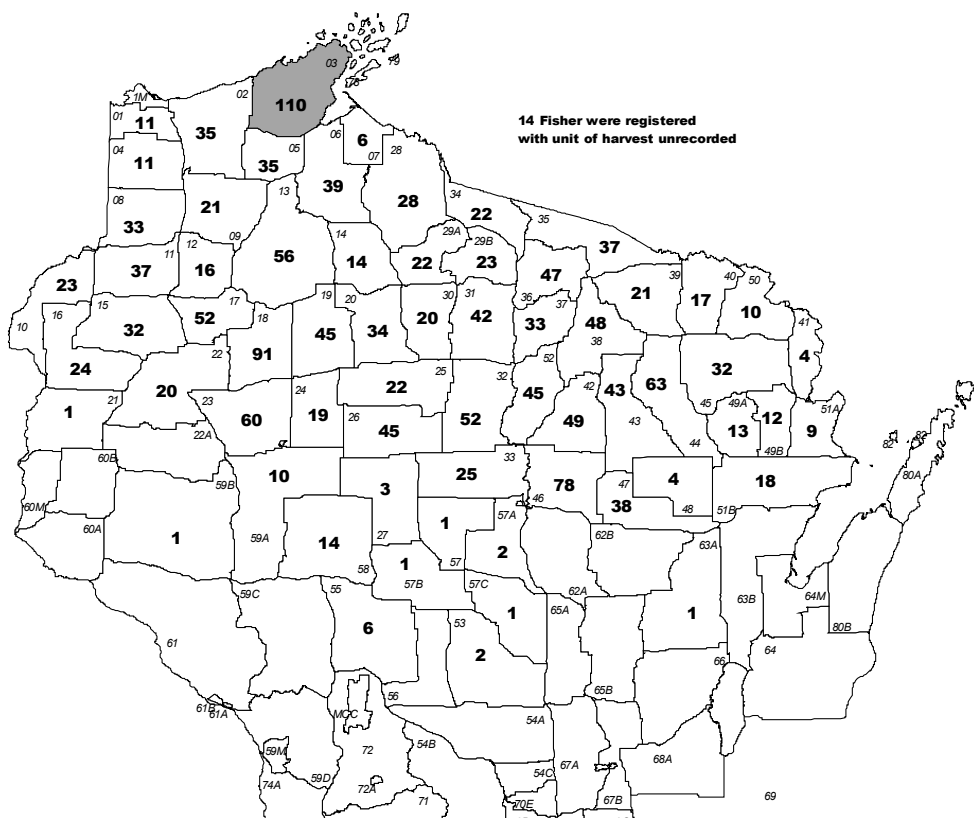


Figure 3. The 2002 fisher harvest by deer management unit (shaded unit is unit of highest harvest).